MATERIAL CULTURE

Dwellings

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554
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The sides of the Yakut winter dwelling are occupied by wide wooden banks called *oron* (bank) or *olox* (seat). The northeastern corner (Fig. 19), where a door or an uncovered entrance leads to the cattle stalls and the other small corners, has no banks. The names of the banks and their uses are of considerable ethnographical interest. The entrance to the Yakut dwelling always faces east, the seat of benevolent deities. The bank directly to the left of the entrance has no name and is designed for household objects. Sometimes there is no bank at all at this point. On the plan illustrated (Fig. 19) Nos. 1 and 3 are called the right side of the dwelling, i.e., facing outward to the entrance. No. 1 is called *atax oron* (the first bank) or *ăna suol oron* (the bank by the door). Its ancient name was *kŏñŭl olox* (the free seat). This seat is for unimportant, impoverished visitors, and serves as a sleeping place for male laborers. In the Kolyma District, during the marriage feast, the bridegroom sits in this place with his back to the banqueting guests.

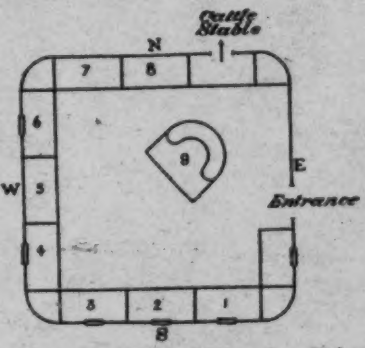

Fig. 19. Groundplan of a Yakut Hut, showing the Position of the Banks, Windows, and Entrance.

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No. 2 is called *ortuku uña oron* (the right middle bank), *tŭnnŭxtax oron* (bank near the window), or *orto olox* (the middle seat). The last is the most ancient name. The designation for No. 2 is the same as for No. 1. When a son-in-law visits his bride in the house of her parents before the *kalym* (bride-price) has been paid, No. 2 is assigned to the couple as a sleeping place.

No. 3 is called *billirik*. It is regarded as the best, most comfortable, and warmest seat and sleeping place in the Yakut hut. Usually there is no window over this bank, although in the sketch a window is shown. The most honored guests or the shaman invited for a performance is seated there. During a wedding the parents of the bridegroom, relatives, and the matchmakers, and other members of the wedding party have this place. The *billirik* is also known under the following names: *tŭs-pediyĕr olox*, *ulŭtuyar olox*, or *tŭs olox*.

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No. 4 is called *bastyñ uña oron* (the right first bank). According to Sieroszevski this position carries less honor than the *billirik*; it is less

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

comfortable, has a window above it, and is within the range of the cold wind from the open entrance door. During a wedding it is occupied by the owners of the house and their nearest relatives; here also are seated honored guests when the *billirik* is already occupied. The *billirik* and the *bastyñ uña oron* form the "venerable corner." There a table stands, over which, under the ceiling, is a small carved and decorated shelf, called *holloruk*, on which are icons and images of saints painted on boards, to which wax candles, decorated with ribbons, beads, and other pendants, are affixed; or an embellished oil lamp is hung in front of the images. There on Sundays and holidays, headed by the hosts, the inmates and guests gather for prayer, so that this corner is transformed into a kind of chapel. During the prayers, the people stand in front or at the rear of the group, in accordance with their age and position in the community. They bow, cross themselves, hold lighted candles, and burn incense. In Fig. 20 may be seen a brass picture of saints fastened to a board surmounted by crosses. The ancient name of the *bastyñ uña oron* was *kōhūl olox*.

No. 5, the bank opposite the fireplace (No. 9) called *kātāharin*, is the family sleeping place above which there is no window.

No. 6, *kānčiārā olox*, is also called *xañas billirik* (left *billirik*) where adult girls (daughters and relatives) sit, work, and sleep. *Kānčiāra-jon* means young people in general.

No. 7 is called *xañas oron*. It serves as a sleeping place for female laborers or servants and grown children of both sexes. On this bank, hidden by a curtain, the bride sits during the three days' wedding festivities.

No. 8 is called *isit oron* (bank for cooking and other household vessels, from *isit*, kitchen ware).

Over Nos. 7 and 8 is usually a shelf called *dolbūr*.

All the banks beyond the *kātāhārīn* are regarded as belonging to the women of the dwelling. When facing the entrance, inside, the male half of the house is to the right and the female half to the left. The *kātāhārīn* (No. 5) or the family sleeping place and all the banks of the female half are supplied with calico (in former times, leather) curtains which are let down during the night.

From the Russians the Yakut adopted the use of tables and tabourets. Illustrations of models of such furniture may be seen in Fig. 21. The table is usually much lower than our tables and the tabouret is as high as the table. The table with refreshments on it is placed before guests sitting on the banks (*oron*) described above. The Yakut name for

[cf. p. 136, category 116 -- ANALYST]

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

177 a table, *ostuol*, shows its origin from the Russian word for table, *stol*.
352 In ancient times, the Yakut used tables without legs, or boards, which were called *sandaly*. These were placed on the floor before the visitors or on the bank between them.

354 The fireplace (*osox*, or *kömülüök*, from the Russian, *kamelek*, No. 9) is situated in the northeastern corner of the dwelling; its front part faces the dividing line between the male and female halves of the house. The hearth, quadratic in form, consists of a wooden trough made of logs or heavy boards, and lined with beaten clay. The length of the sides of the trough is about 5 feet and the height about 11 inches. The chimney, open in front and sloping backward somewhat, consists of poles, tied with twigs at the top, over the roof, and coated inside with clay. The mistress of the house is the chief guardian of the hearth which is the family protector. She alone is privileged to pass in front of it; all the other women must go around back of it. If the master of the house or an honorary guest stands in front of the hearth, the mistress too must pass behind it. During her menstrual period a woman is not allowed to touch the fire or to approach the hearth. A woman lying-in and her midwife may not enter the part of the house lighted by the flame of the hearth. A bride entering the house of her husband must throw a few little sticks into the fire and make a libation of melted butter. After these, she becomes a member of the family. It seems that the throwing of little sticks is symbolic of making fire, the task of a woman member of the family. A photograph of the Yakut hearth (Fig. 52) may be seen in the chapter on pottery.

Fig. 21 (70-9284, 9281). Model of a Table and a Chair.

562 841 844 585 354

342 171 Fig. 22 shows the exterior of the Yakut earth hut. When built separately from the earth hut for cattle, it has the form of a truncated pyramid, but in the illustration the two structures are combined. The cattle stable has an exit door to the yard, but there is also an inside door leading from the dwelling to the cattle stable (Fig. 19). The Russians call the Yakut earth hut, *yourta*, a name given to all types of native dwellings whether tents or permanent huts. The Yakut themselves call their earth hut, *balahan*, a name used also by the Mongoloid peoples of Siberia. There is a winter earth hut (*kystyk balahan*) and a summer earth hut (*sayylyk balahan*) which do not differ. The summer hut is

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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erected in places where the Yakut make and prepare hay for the winter, when it is transported on sledges to the winter quarters as needed. Pekarsky says that the Buryat and Mongol also use the word *balahan* for earth huts,[1] but the noted linguist, Böhtlingk, finds that *balahan* is not a Yakut but a Persian word introduced to the Yakut by Russians.[2] A genuine Yakut word for dwelling in general is *djiyā* or *jiyā; buordjiyā*, earth hut; *tuos djijā* (=*urasa*), birchbark tent; *sakha djiātā* (=*buor djiyā*), Yakut dwelling; *nuča djiātā* (Russian house), block or log house.

Fig. 22. Exterior of a Yakut Hut in Winter.

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The Yakut earth hut is built as follows: four posts, driven into the ground, are joined by four cross-beams, on which rest the upper ends of poles or roughly hewn boards, set up in a slanting position. The cross-beams are covered with branches, poles, or boards, over which bark is spread, thus forming the ceiling and roof. Then the roof and sloping walls are covered with mud, earth, and clay, mixed with cow dung. In winter a layer of snow is added. The floor, generally of beaten mud, is sunk about two feet below the ground; rich people, however, have it level with the ground and covered with boards. The windows, mentioned before, forming small square openings, admit scant light, and are covered by sheets of ice in winter, and, in summer, with fish membrane, mica, oiled paper, or dense horsehair nets, which ventilate the dwelling

[1] Pekarsky, *Dictionary of the Yakut Language*, *op. cit.*, 346.

[2] Böhtlingk, Otto von, Über die Sprache der Jakuten. Grammatik, Text und Wörterbuch. (*Besonderer Abdruck des dritten Bandes von Dr. A. T. Middendorf's Reise in den äussersten Norden und Osten Sibiriens, St. Petersburg*, 1851), 131.

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2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

Fig. 23. Log House of the Russian Type, belonging to a Rich Yakut Elder on the Lena River not far from Yakutsk.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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Fig. 24. Large Conical Birchbark Tent, an Ancient Type of Yakut Summer Dwelling.

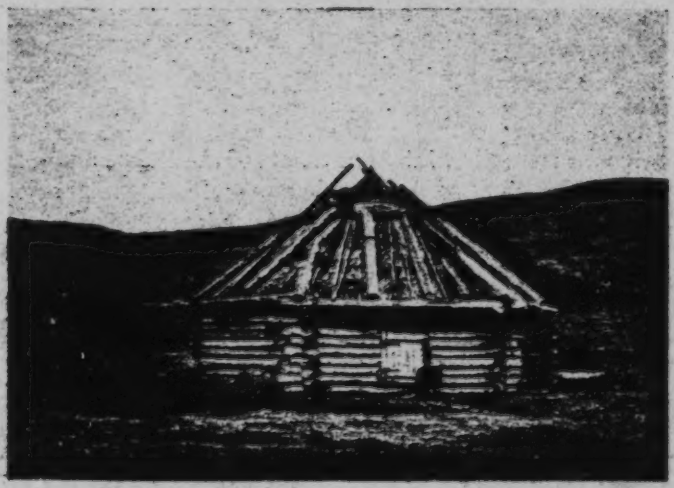

Fig. 25. Polygonal Sloping Roofed Blockhouse at Verkhne Kolymsk.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

342 and shut out mosquitoes. We may assume that this kind of dwelling was invented by the Yakut after their arrival in their present territory from a more southerly habitat. Indeed, the present Yakut dwelling is far more fitted to the harsh sub-polar or polar climate than any type of tent.

[177] When living near cities or Russian settlements, the Yakut abandon their earth huts and live in log houses of the Russian type. Fig. 23 illustrates a log house of a rich Yakut elder on the Lena River not far from the City of Yakutsk.

As a summer dwelling, the ancient Yakut used a conical tent covered with birchbark (Fig. 24). It differs from other types of birchbark tents in size and in the heavy and solid construction of the wooden frame, so that it cannot be easily transported. These large tent-like dwellings

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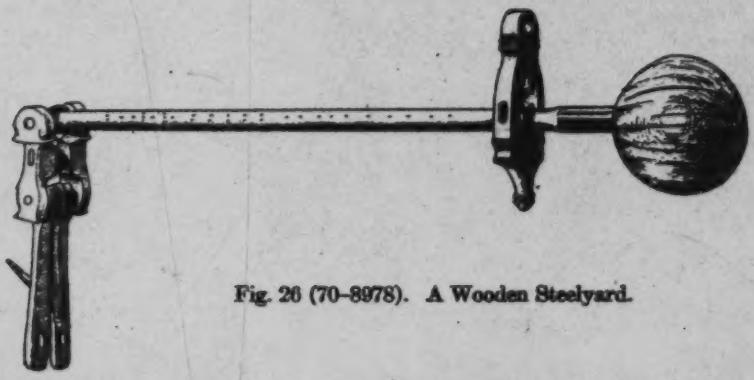

Fig. 26 (70-8978). A Wooden Steelyard.

were located far from the winter earth huts of the Yakut and were occupied during the summer so that the horses and cattle might not injure the meadows on which hay is grown for the winter and near which the winter dwellings are situated.

354 The fireplace of the birchbark tent is constructed like the hearth of the earth hut, i.e., it is a large wooden bottomless box filled with beaten clay. The only difference is that in the tent the fireplace is situated in the center under the opening in the top and has no chimney. This type of dwelling is no longer used, though twenty-five years ago it was occa-
353 sionally observed. The tent was ornamented with engravings, wood, and birchbark carvings, sinew and horsehair embroidery, and with slivers of colored mica and pieces of bright cloth.

342 [177] In some districts a polygonal sloping-roofed blockhouse (Fig. 25) was used instead of the conical tent. The author saw such blockhouses

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

among the Yakut fishermen of the Upper Kolyma River, as well as among the local Russian settlers. The Altaian Turks also use such a dwelling.

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Clothing

Headgear takes many forms. One type, worn by men as well as women, has a somewhat pointed top and is trimmed with a large strip of squirrel, fox or marmot skin. Two pointed tabs at the sides protect the ears, as may be seen, for instance, in Fig. 27 which shows a Yakut riding on an ox. Caps of such shape may be seen on the so-called "stone women" in Mongolia, according to Marco Polo.

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Fig. 27. A Yakut riding an Ox harnessed to a Sledge loaded with Plaited Grass Mats.

A fairly common form for a man's fur cap is shown in Figs. 28 and 29. It has two leather strips which are tied under the chin.

Not far from Yakutsk and other Russian settlements, Yakut men wear round caps of the Russian style with crowns of foxes' legs and trimmed with land otter fur. [177]

In Fig. 30 is illustrated a woman's cap made of fox legskin, trimmed in front with a strip of land otterskin. There are two pairs of leather tie strings; the first is tied under the chin, the second around the neck. The back is ornamented with strips of leather and calico. It is lined with fur from the belly of a fox.

2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

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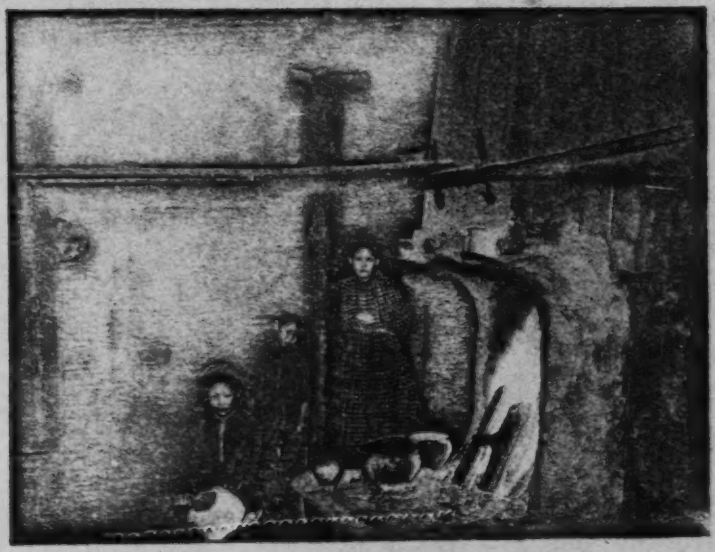

Fig. 52. Interior of a Yakut Winter Dwelling. A potter is at work near the hearth.

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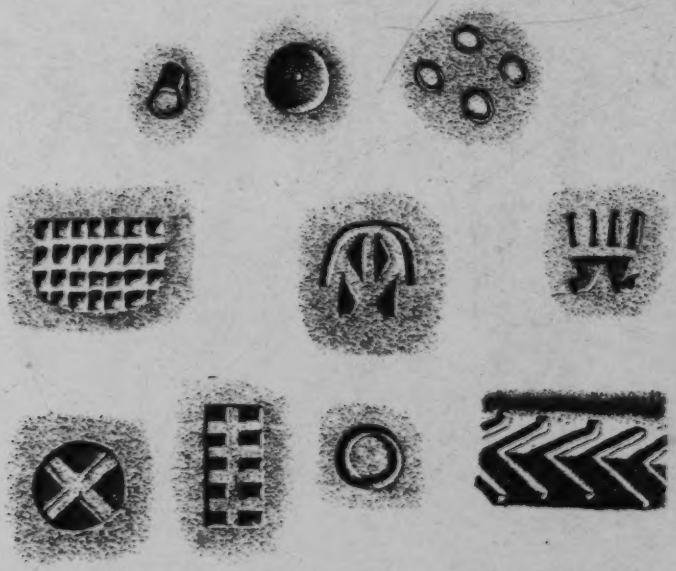


Fig. 53 (70-9249, 9250, 9248). Types of Pottery Designs.

6: Sauer--117 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 342, 554, 574, 756, 796

"A summer hut is built of thin poles of a conical form, covered with the inner bark of birch, on some extensive meadow. It is ornamented inside and out with branches of the birch-tree, and a hearth is made in the centre. Relations and acquaintances are invited to the banquet; but all guests are welcome of every nation indiscriminately. The magicians take the head seats; others are seated according to the estimation of their seniority. (1)

1. Years do not secure the title of senior, (Oghonior,) which is the greatest term of respect that the Socha know. Magicians have it, and all such as are capable of advising the proper means to be adopted to secure success to such public and private concerns as are virtuous and good."

6: Sauer--125 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 342, 574, 823

"They always take care that the doors of their huts shall face the east. The fire-place is nearly in the middle; the back of the chimney towards the door, and a free passage quite round it. The sides of the hut are furnished with benches and small cabins, which serve for sleeping places. The bench extends about four feet into the hut, where the inhabitants sit. The men keep the south side, and the women the north. Except the hostess, no woman may give any thing to eat or drink to a male stranger before the fire-place, but must walk round the chimney to present it."

9: Stadling--92 [2] E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut
116; 342; 352; 562.

"The Yakut dwellings, the 'yurtas,' are wooden huts with sloping walls covered with a thick layer of turf. In the place of window-glass ox-bladders are used in summer-time and ice in winter. The window-openings are usually not more than a foot square in size. the fireplace is in the middle of the yurta, and is made of poles, placed close together and covered with mud or clay. Along the walls inside the dwelling run low nares or benches, between the wooden pillars, serving as sitting-places during the daytime and as bedsteads at night. The yurta is divided into two parts: to the right from the entrance is the women's and children's apartment, where, among the poorest classes, the cattle are also housed; and to the left that of the men. To the women's apartment men not belonging to the family are not allowed to go. The Yakuts generally have special yurtas for winter and summer, the latter usually situated near their meadows and haystacks. In the far north they often live in tents or huts resembling those of the Lapps."

10: Bush--173-174 T-3 (1865-67) 1871 Yakut-1-2
116, 342, 354

"The storehouses and stables about the settlement were ordinary log buildings, but the inhabited yourts more resembled mounds of clay on the exterior than dwellings. Solavaoff immediately conducted us to his yourt upon dismounting from our deer. We entered by a small leaning door lined with deerskins into an apartment about twenty feet square. After the usual plan of the Yakouts, the house was built of small split logs standing upon end instead of lying horizontally and sloping inward toward the top like the sides of a Mississippi River iron-clad. It was also roofed with split logs, supported by heavy posts, and the whole banked over on the outside with clay for warmth. Two small apertures a foot or two square, in each wall, admitted light. Some of these were glazed with fragments of glass obtained from whalers, but, for the most part, tranlucent fish-skins sewed together, or cakes of transparent ice, served as a substitute. These last are secured in place by a mixture of snow and water used as mortar, which freezes upon application, and remains perfectly solid during the long, cold winters. Ice windows will often last for months. The temperature inside the hut during the daytime is rarely warm enough to thaw them, and at night a stuffed deerskin pillow is thrust into each aperture as a protection from the hot breath of the numerous sleepers inside." [174]

The feature of a Yakout yourt is the chual, or fireplace. This stands in one corner, out from the walls of the apartment, facing diagonally across the room. The chimney and fireplace are all one, built of long light poles bound together with wisps in the proper shape, and then plastered over with several layers of clay, each layer being carefully

baked and hardened before a fresh one is applied. They are broad and concave, so that the heat and light are reflected to all parts of the room, and, besides, are so massive as to retain warmth for many hours."

10: Bush--174 T-3 (1865-67) 1871 Yakut
116, 342, 352

"Upon three sides of the room were ranged a single tier of bunks, serving as seats during the day, as well as beds at night. Those inseparables of a Russian habitation, the penates and samovar, attracted our attention at once upon entering, and gave the place an air of civilization;"

11: Lansdell--300 M-3 (1879) 1882 Yakut
116, 231, 342, 354

"The winter dwellings of the people have doors of raw hides, and log or wicker walls calked with cow-dung, and flanked with banks of earth to the height of the windows. The latter are made of sheets of ice, kept in their place from the outside by a slanting pole, the lower end of which is fixed in the ground. They are rendered air-tight by pouring on water, which quickly freezes round the edges; and the fact that it takes a long time to melt these blocks of ice thus fixed is highly suggestive of what the temperature must be, both without and within. The flat roof is covered with earth, and over the door, facing the east, the boards project, making a covered place in front, like the natives' houses in the Caucasus. Under the same roof are the winter shelters for the cows and for the people, the former being the larger. The fireplace consists of a wicker frame plastered over with clay, room being left for a man to pass between the fireplace and the wall. The hearth is made of beaten earth, and on it there is at all times a blazing fire, and logs of larchwood throw up showers of sparks to the roof. Young calves, like children, are often brought into the house to the fire, whilst their mothers cast a contented look through the open door at the back of the fireplace. Behind the fireplace, too, are the sleeping-places of the people, which in the poorer dwellings consist only of a continuation of the straw laid in the cow-house."

11: Lansdell--300-301 M-3 (1879) 1882 Yakut
116, 342

"In the winter they have but about five hours of daylight, which penetrates as best it can through the icy windows; and in the evening all the party sit round [301] the fire on low stools, men and women smoking. The summer yourts of these people are formed of poles about 20 feet long, which are united at the top into a roomy cone, covered with pieces of bright yellow and perfectly flexible birch bark, which are not merely joined together, but are also handsomely worked along the seams with horsehair thread."

12: Galitzin -- 145 [2] N-2 (no date) 1853 Yakut
116, 342, 354

"The winter's yourtes of the Yacoutes have the form of truncated pyramids. They are square. To construct them, they make use of poles fixed in the ground in an inclined position, and they spread on them a mixture of dung and soil. The roof is flat, and made with planks of birch--tree's bark, which possesses the property of being almost inaccessible to rottenness. Seldom any floor is to be found. The hearth, or tchouval occupies the centre: above there is a chimney made with planking laid on with clay. This dwelling, however light be its construction, is sufficiently warm to be able to live in it in the winter season; besides, it offers the advantage of being constantly ventilated by means of the hearth, which being always lighted, purifies the air. During the summer months the Yacoutes construct for their use temporary yourtes without hearth in the localities to which they remove in the hay-harvest season."

13: Sarytschew--9-10 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut
116, 231, 342

"The Jakutish jurts are built from the ground, describing a square of more or less' magnitude, according to the size of the family. They first drive three rows of poles fast into the earth, [10] the middle one of which is rather higher than the two on each side. On these poles they lay five beams crossways and sloping, which are covered with rough planks, and afterwards with herbs, mould, and dung. The middle of the interior is generally occupied by a hearth, from whence the smoke is carried out by a sort of chimney, composed of long thick sticks, plaistered in the inside with pitch. The wood is placed in an upright direction on the hearth, and the fire is never extinguished during the winter. Broad benches are fixed round the walls of the jurts or huts, which are divided off by partitions into sleeping places. Their horned cattle are kept in a separate building connected with the jurt by an opening, through which they pass, from whence the whole dwelling is filled with an offensive smell. The summer jurts are altogether different from the winter ones, and have another name, being called urasses; they are round and conical, made of long poles, and covered on the outside with the bark of trees."

17: Erman--263 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 237, 342

"We arrived about seven in the morning at Beresovoi Ostrov, or Birch Island, fifty-six versts from Nokhtuisk. The place so called contains a single very comfortable farmhouse, built by an old exile from the government of Nijegorod.... In the construction of the house and stable the example of the Yakuts was here followed, for the wooden walls were plastered on the outside with cow-dung."

17: Erman--266 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 231, 342

"From Nelensk to Olekma we left the ice for three stages, and a distance of ninety-five versts, and travelled through a marshy plain on the left bank. We first met with some Yakutian yurts, with flat roofs covered up high with earth, and surrounded with hurdles, within which the cattle are kept in summer, and then we came to the dangerous spot of which we had been told yesterday."

17: Erman--266-267 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 342, 361, 492

"The tract of country which follows [RCH: from Neleusk to Olekma] is well peopled with Yakuts, whose winter dwellings always stand alone, in wide grassy lawns, in the midst of the prevailing pine woods. Here, too, the rectangular wooden huts are flat-roofed and plastered with cow dung, and the doors, for want of planking, are covered over with hairy ox hides. Flakes of ice fill the windows, yet in some of the yurts, bladder is used instead of these. The Yakutian sledges, which we met with continually were, like those of the Buraets, drawn by oxen, on one of which the driver rode. At the same time horses have been used here for riding fromearly [267] ages, as is proved indeed by the peculiarities of the Yakutian horse furniture. Their saddles have unusually thick stuffing, on which the rider sits, squeezed in between two high and perpendicular boards. The white colour of the horses decidedly gains ground here, along with the Yakutian population."

17: Erman--269 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 342, 171, 354, 372

"The Yakuts in Namana, and along the road onward for 110 versts, as far as Sanayakh-tàtsk, live still quite in their ancient, original fashion. Again, I found their yurts exactly like those of the Ostyaks; they are rectangular, flat-roofed, and fitted inside with what are here called narui, that is, raised and divided berths along the walls. The thick flakes of ice, which serve as window panes, were here also held against the wall from the outside, by a slanting pole, the lower end of which was fixed in the ground. In the night, when the fire goes out, this ice is covered, like glass, with an opaque and snow-like hoar-frost, which, in the daytime melts away, as well as a considerable portion of the ice itself, from the heat of the yurt, and the flakes, which are, at first, a foot thick, require to be renewed four or five times in the course of the winter; a provision of suitable ice always lying before the yurt. The parts of these dwellings which are directly heated by the fire, attain a temperature of +15° or +20° R. (1) We found the

1. It may be assumed that, of the heat proceeding from the fire-place, there is as much expended on the flake of ice as passes, on an average, through an equal area of the wooden wall. In a cubical yurt of 15 feet, the melting, in succession, of four flakes of ice a foot thick, shows that the whole amount of heat in 170 winter's days, would suffice to melt 5400 cubic feet of ice. The quantity of fuel required for this would amount, according to Rumford's experiments, if applied most advantageously,

> to 231 cubic feet of wood in the course of the winter, or about 87 pounds a day. The daily supply which lies near the fire-place in the Yakutian yurts seems not to exceed this.

children in them, of both sexes, quite naked; they were, nevertheless, running about in this state to-day, when the thermometer was as low as —10° R., and even in the open air."

17: Erman--306-307 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 342

"Deep snow had effaced every trace of the road, even between the trees, and it was not till noon, therefore, and eleven hours after our first starting, that we reached Talbuiyakhtàtsk, [307] a stage only twenty-eight versts from Yakutsk. There, in a cleared spot of the wood, stand four winter yurts; close by are some paddocks fenced in, to keep the cattle together in summer, and a frame of a tent, which is likewise used only in the warm season. It is formed of a number of poles, about twenty feet long, which are united at the top into a roomy cone. The Russians call these summer abodes of the Yakuts, berostinui, from beresa, the birch, because they are covered with the bark of this tree. Here the people were, in fact, repairing a roof of this kind. It was made of quadrangular pieces of bright yellow and perfectly flexible bark, which was not merely joined together, but was very handsomely worked along the seam with horsehair thread."

24: Wrangell--38 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 222, 342, 354, 356

"The Jakutian habitations are of two kinds. In summer they dwell in what they call urossy, which are light circular tents formed of poles and covered with birch-bark, which they strip from the trees in large pieces. These are first softened by boiling, and then sewed together; and the outside of the urossy, from the colour of the bark being white,, have a very pleasing appearance, and at a distance resemble large canvass tents. In the summer they wander about with these in search of the finest pastures; and while their cattle are feeding, they themselves are incessantly employed in collecting the requisite store of winter forage.

At the approach of that season they take possession of their warm jurti. These are cottages formed of thin boards in the shape of a truncated pyramid, and covered thickly on the outside with sticks, grass, and mud. A couple of small opening, which admit a scanty light, are closed in winter with plates of ice, and in summer with fish-membrane or oiled paper. The floor is generally of beaten mud, and is sunk two or three feet below the surface of the ground; but people in better circumstances have it raised and boarded. There are wide permanent benches round the walls, which serve for seats in the daytime, and for sleeping on at night; and they are generally partitioned off for this purpose, according to the number of occupants. In the middle, but rather nearest the door, is the tschuwal, a kind of open hearth with a chimney up to the roof, where a fire is constantly kept burning. Clothing, arms, and a few household articles hang round the walls, but in general the greatest disorder and want of cleanliness prevail."

24: Wrangell--39 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 177, 342, 354

"The above-described habitations [RCH: the Yakutian yourts or jurti; see category 116, p. 38], though rude, are better adapted to the wants of the people than those built after the Russian fashion, a few of which are to be seen. In the construction of the jurti small trees may be used instead of boards, which is a great convenience; while the open fire in the tschuwal, by keeping up a continual change of air, is far more conducive to health than the close stove."

43: Karutz--74 [2] E-2 (no date) 1925 Yakut
116, 171, 342, 414

Those who still own reindeer wander around during the summer according to the opportunities of fishing, reindeer and goose killing, and of trapping during the winter; they then live in tents. However, they incline to settledness and build solid cabins of oblique posts, with a plastering of loam and dung and, finally, mud. The windows are made of reindeer bladder. The doors are locked by means of those strange wooden locks, which consist of square pieces of wood falling into appropriate holes, and which are used all over Western Asia, Europe, and Northern Africa.

44: Gilder -- 175 J-2 (1882) 1883 Yakut
116, 161, 177, 342, 361 Russia
636.36

"Sradnia, or Middle Kolymsk, is a Russian settlement of about 500 inhabitants, including Russians Yakouts, and a few Tchouktchis. The houses are all built of hewn logs, are but one story high, and the windows are glazed with blocks of transparent ice. Some of the houses have windows of glass, but these are always much broken and mended, so that seen from the outside they look like the stained-glass windows of a church. The most conspicuous building there, as in all the little Russian towns, is the church edifice, which is of Oriental architecture, with a dome surmounted by a cross and exceedingly florid in its style of architecture. Adjoining the church, and within the same enclosure, is a small wooden tower surrounded by a block-house, which was built by the first settlers of Sradnia as a means of defence against the savage Yakouts and Tchouktchis. This town is irregularly built and extends over a considerable area of ground, the Government buildings being situated about a mile from the centre. By Government buildings is meant merely the storehouses for grain and bread and for the skins which are received for taxes. These buildings are of logs, with great heavy doors and padlocks about the size of an ordinary valise, while the key is a load of itself."

44: Gilder -- 332 J-2 (1882) 1883 Yakut
116, 252, 262, 264, 342, 556

"The country here [RCH: between the Aldan River and Yakutsk] is more thickly peopled than further north, but the houses are of the same construction--logs notched into each other at the corners and a flat roof of logs closely laid and covered with a thick layer of turf. The whole outside of the structure is afterward smeared with manure. The rich Yakouts live just like the poor ones-- the same kind of houses, one little end reserved for the family, and the other filled with cows and calves. At the season I passed through this country these people live entirely upon milk, rich and poor, alike. The milk is boiled with the inner bark of the pine tree, pounded first to break the fibres. Sometimes this dish is improved with a gallon or two of minnows, caught in traps that are set for the purpose in every lake and stream. I have eaten of this dish with these people in the fashionable style--that is, each male is provided with a large wooden spoon, and the pot is set in the middle of the table, so that every one can fish for himself. When one is hungry it is a very palatable dish, but I cannot understand how great, strong men can be satisfied to subsist on milk when they have an abundance of cattle. Perhaps it is this milk diet that makes such cowards of these people."

45: Lesseps--302-303 T-2 (1788) 1790 Yakut
116, 342, 354, 592

" The size of these houses [RCH: i.e., Yakut yourts] varies according to the wealth of the proprietor, and the number of his family. Beams, placed by the side of one another, and plaistered with clay, form the walls, which are not like ours, perpendicular. Inclining towards the top, they support a roof, the slope of which is very inconsiderable: in some yourts the roof is supported by posts. The house has but one door, and is divided, as I have already observed, into two apartments. The cleanest is inhabited by the family, who sleep in distinct huts, distributed at equal distances against the walls, and which I can compare to nothing better than the small [303] cabins in Dutch ships: every couple have a hut to themselves. The other part of the yourt is for the cattle, and is nothing more than a stable. In the center of the building is a round chimney made of wood, and guarded from accidents by a thick clay covering. When they light a fire, the wood is placed perpendicularly. Cross beams are occasionally placed in the chimney, upon which they hang their kettles, and these are repeated, in proportion to the number of vessels they have to boil."

45: Lesseps--315-316 T-2 (1788) 1790 Yakut
116, 342, 531

" Like the yourts of the wandering Koriacs, they [RCH: Yakut yourts] are circular, spacious, and constructed with poles, fewer in number, but ranged in the same manner, and kept asunder by a sort of hoops at the top; the whole covered in with the bark of the birch tree (1), formed into pieces eighteen inches wide, placed

1. The bark of this tree is stripped off in the spring.

in a downward direction. These pieces are edged with a kind of ribband equally made of this bark, and shaped into festoons, and the inside of the yourt is orna- [316] mented in the same manner. The taste of these ornaments is governed bu the caprice of the proprietor, and there is in them a sort of wildness that is sufficiently amusing. The same decoration is annexed to the chairs and beds of the heads of families. The domestic lie upon the ground on mats or skins, and the fire is lighted in the middle of the house."

46: Cottrell--138 T-2 (1840) 1842 Yakut
116, 221, 262, 342, 354

"They are a more sedentary people than most of their neighbours, and only migrate to find fresh pasture for their cattle once a year. Their summer huts are made of birch bark, of which strips are sewed together with horsehair. In autumn they return to their wooden sheds in the forests adjacent to the meadows where the hay is made and stacked up. These are covered over with a thick coating of cowdung, which keeps them warm, and they are not troubled with the smoke, from having chimneys which carry it away. These are wooden pipes well guarded from the fire by a thick plaster of clay and cowdung. The hut contains one window, always to the right of the entrance, which is filled up with a large block of transparent ice, which they scrape clean from the rime frost which attaches itself to it, when the pipe is stopped up at night. Their usual beverage in summer is the kumysse, made of fermented mares'-milk, which the Kirghis also drink, and their food consists of the thin under skin of the larch or fir boiled with fresh milk or curds. The richer classes eat butter and fat with it; many of them have a hundred cows and horses."

/127 cont./

122 speaking, but so poor that a shirt made of it falls off the body
123 in rags after a few days. To be sure, this is defective goods
[437] from Jakutsk /Yakutsk/ or Wiljuisk /Vilyuisk/, which in this respect is probably the last possible link in the long progression of merchandise that moves from the factories to Nishni-Nowgorod /Nizhni Novgorod/, Irbit, Tomsk, etc., steadily decreasing in quality. A reindeer which we wished to buy was not brought along, because the Jakute /Yakut/ had had a death in his family a few days before and during his attending to the burial the reindeer had gone astray. At least so he said, and he showed absolutely no desire to accompany us. Only when he saw the relatively rich presents in the form of powder, lead, flour, tea, ropes, and the like that Ssemjón received for his services did he decide to come along, at first probably with the intention of soon leaving us again after finding a substitute, whom he hoped to find somewhere in the vicinity.

122 Boldonó is not the only inhabitant of this region; /128/ on
123 the Olenék itself, above the mouth of the Ssiligír, we saw a
[342] tschum /choom/ and a large storage chamber. Its owner,
343 Gurtschúna, likewise a Jakute /Yakut/, was not present, but
[131] had gone to the Dolgán, who, according to Middendorff's map, are to be found from the mouth of the Anábara to the Jenisseí /Yenisei/ at Dúdino. The son of the schúlinga of this region was also supposed to be staying temporarily in the vicinity of the Ssiligír. And in fact we saw nets hung at the mouth of the Ssénjka, which probably belonged to him, but he was not to be seen, in spite of calls and shots. Ssemjón accompanied us a short distance beyond the Ssiligír, which flows into the Olenék from the right side with two branches at the junction and, after the Argáchala, is probably its most important tributary. Then he took his leave with many thanks and went back to his family, which probably was now willing to be found.

/131 cont./

122 this one; we could not even buy a reindeer from him. /132/
123 He pretended to be a poor man and to own only five of them, on which he had come here with his family; nevertheless immediately after he left us, we saw 11 fine reindeer, which accompanied us along the bank for a long time. We had already heard about the inhospitality and untrustworthiness of the people along the Olenék; now we could report on it ourselves.

Fortunately on the evening of the next day our attention was again drawn to a human habitation by a column of smoke. Soon after we had landed a little distance from it, a boat came toward us. The occupant of it, perhaps frightened because he saw me lounging on the bank with my gun, approached with his weapon held ready and called to us from a distance. Only when he was addressed in his mother tongue (Jakut /Yakut/) did [186] he put aside the weapon and come to land. He later explained that he had taken us for Tatars, who, according to a legend [648] that he had heard in childhood, were supposed to be great robbers. Boldonó's attempt to whisper something in the ear of the new arrival was fortunately thwarted by Sseliphón, and so he proved to be ready to sell us a reindeer immediately, as well as, after some parleying, to accompany us as a guide on our further travels. Boldonó was kept away from our new guide, named Ignátij, as much as possible by our men, who had also become suspicious of him, and was paid off the next morning, this time certainly not generously and with a few threats on account of his bad conduct. /The last paragraph on p. 132 and pp. 133-134 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text./

• [342] /135/ On the evening of August 19 we again came in sight [231] of a tschum /choom/, as well as a larger herd of reindeer, probably about 50 head. Ignátij explained that this was a Jakute /Yakut/ with whom he was acquainted, Filípp Chologón, with whom in the previous spring he had hunted wild reindeer on the upper Beké, a rich man and formerly a community elder, who also knew the river well, "for he swims around on it like a gagára." In any case it would pay to make his acquaintance. We therefore, since no good landing place was to be found in his vicinity, put in a few versts below and sent Ignátij and

/163 cont./

122 In particular he urged haste, for with the disappearance of the sun at the /164/ beginning of November the most frightful snowstorms customarily set in, which are very dangerous, especially on the tundra.

Unfortunately we did not have much time to converse with him, because night had already fallen and we still had a good stretch to cover to the balagan of the elder. Sachár O'ssipowitsch made us a gift of some fresh white and rye bread and a magnificent fish (néljma), a delicacy missing for a long time; we then left him, after he had most cordially invited us to stay at his house in Ssiktjách upon our return trip, even in his absence.

In the balagan of the elder we were greeted by his wife and given the best places, next to the fire, and the elder could not be talked out of showing us and our men hospitality with fat reindeer meat and frozen milk. The people here obviously had a better way of life than our Tungus friends along the Tunguska, who were certainly not poor.

● 342 For the first time we found ourselves in a Jakut /Yakut/ balagan and had to admit that in severe cold it was much to be [333] preferred to our light tschum /choom/. Such a balagan, or [335] yurt, also called stan when it is used as a station at the same time, and powárnja, that is, kitchen, by some travelers, is a rectangular hut with garret-shaped, sloping side-walls and a flat roof, made out of tree trunks, which are plastered with clay on the outside and are thickly covered with snow in the winter. Any cracks are carefully plugged up with moss from the inside. [354] The windows consist of thick sheets of ice; in the middle [352] stands a Jakut fireplace (kamelók), likewise made out of clay-plastered logs and around this are a number of sleeping places, that is, simple wooden chests without bottoms, which are filled with stamped-down earth /165/ and therefore provide neither a soft bed nor, since they extend directly to the outer [362] wall, a warm one; there are usually six of them. To be sure, [122] such a balagan still leaves much to be desired; in particular the fireplace usually stands too far from the sleeping places and during the night frightful cold comes in through the wide,

/165 cont./

342 not always closable chimney, if it is not heated--nevertheless [362] we were pleased by the news that on our journey, especially on [122] the return trip, we would for the most part reach balagans for [123] spending the night, and only now, on the first two days of travel and then on the tundra, must content ourselves with the tschum, for which, incidentally, we obtained as a loan from our host a fine leather covering. /The remainder of the chapter, pp. 165-166, is omitted in the translation; see the foreign text./

/167/ Eighth Chapter

Travel by narten. -- The timber line. -- The parallel of the North Cape. -- The settlement of Kuladý on the Pur. -- Wolves. -- Preparations for the tundra journey. -- Popular lectures for Jakuten /Yakut/. -- Patriarchal customs. -- Purga. -- The village of Boljkalák or Ustj-Olénskoje. -- Festive reception. -- Geological data. -- Within sight of the Arctic Ocean. -- Canine concert. -- The illustrious dead of the Olenék. -- Fishing and hunting. -- Well-being of the natives. -- Exchange of gifts. -- Off for home! -- Departure from the Olenék. -- Reception in Ssiktjach.

/The remainder of p. 167, pp. 168-171, and the first paragraph of p. 172 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text. Page 172 continues as follows./

122 Thus our trip was assured and all that remained was to provide for new, sounder narten /Russ. narta, "sled"/; these were finished in the next two days, the ones for Czekanowsky and myself even being fitted with leather kibitkas. Meanwhile we were profoundly bored during our wait of over four days. Czekanowsky had some trees cut down, measured them, and counted the annual rings. I had long finished with my magnetic and astronomical observations, having positively wrested the latter from the unfavorable weather. Thus there was nothing to do but chat with the Jakuten through the interpreter, particularly with the elder, who had caught cold traveling back and forth and therefore was now confined to his room, or rather to the yurt.

/184 cont./

224 caught in traps, but is also dug out of its den, as we ourselves had
[435] an opportunity to observe on our return journey. The price of a good skin here yields on the average about a ruble, but many different kinds are distinguished according to quality, and the poorer ones are valued at only half a ruble; the winter pelts are, of course, the best. The highly prized blue variety of the arctic fox seems
[651] to be practically unknown here. The crown tax as well as the goods purchased from the merchants are paid for with the skins of the arctic fox.

[543] Around Easter a kind of annual fair is held here, at which appear both the inhabitants of the islands lying in front of the mouth of the Olenék and those from the nearest settlements of the forest region, in order /185/ to trade skins for the necessary commodities
[571] from the traders -- tobacco, tea, cloth, ironware, etc. Despite the inhospitable climate the people here seem to be well off and
[512] very content. Even during the dark months they go about their
[132] activities out in the open, especially fishing, and only about the time of the reappearance of the sun, around the Day of the Holy Three Kings (sixth of January, old style), when the most frightful snowstorms set in, do they shut themselves up completely -- often
342 for a couple of weeks -- in their dwellings. The latter are much
362 more solidly built than in the forest region, in order to offer suf-
313 ficient resistance against the force of the storms. The material for building as well as for heating consists of driftwood which is supplied by the river and even more by the ocean. Besides the
797 merchants, Boljkalák is also visited almost annually by a missionary, who holds services in the chapel here. Chitrow praises the devoutness of the people -- the outward signs of this did not remain unnoticed by us either.

554 On the day after our arrival the elder (stárosta) of the
292 Kangaláss Jakuten /Yakut/ appeared with fresh reindeer for the
123 return journey. He ranked higher than both the local elder and the one accompanying us and wore, as a mark of distinction, a sort of uniform, a yellowish gray cloth coat with red trimming
233 and a gold-embroidered belt with a short sword. The new reindeer, which had to be given a day of rest, and the previous ones

/241 cont./

122 At the very next station, Toraískij, which we reached at
731 1:00 in the afternoon, we were obliged to halt. The manageress complained to us that her husband had left the day before to get horses, and she was very afraid that since he had been gone so long he had fallen ill with smallpox. Unfortunately here, too, our Cossack proved utterly useless. Even though the Cossack's uniform is generally greatly respected, our unfortunate companion never succeeded in arousing anything but laughter whenever he was supposed to show his authority, because he could not hide his ineptitude. We had sent him ahead with an interpreter and our papers to the next station, Karagát-erdún, where a Jakut /Yakut/ authority -- the Borogónskaja upráwa /uprava/ -- was to be found, in order to have horses sent from there, but he did not come back at all, and we therefore started out the next morning without him, since we had succeeded in rounding up a few horses. We met him on the way -- he brought the almost self-evident news that he had accomplished nothing. From this station on our journey finally proceeded without any particular obstacles. At every station, to be sure, we heard about the smallpox and the sick, who were said to be present in the closest
● 342 proximity, but we did not see any. All the conditions for a rapid
731 spread of the epidemic through contagion certainly existed in the frightfully stuffy air of the yurts, filled with mephitic vapors. Since the /242/ livestock is very often found in the same rooms in which people are quartered, the air is so poisoned that anyone entering from the pure winter air actually loses his breath, and he needs some time to become accustomed to it. I remember when I once entered a station and, half stupified by this atmosphere and with my glasses badly dimmed, abruptly collided with a post nag, which seemed very much surprised that I begrudged him his favorite place near the fireplace.

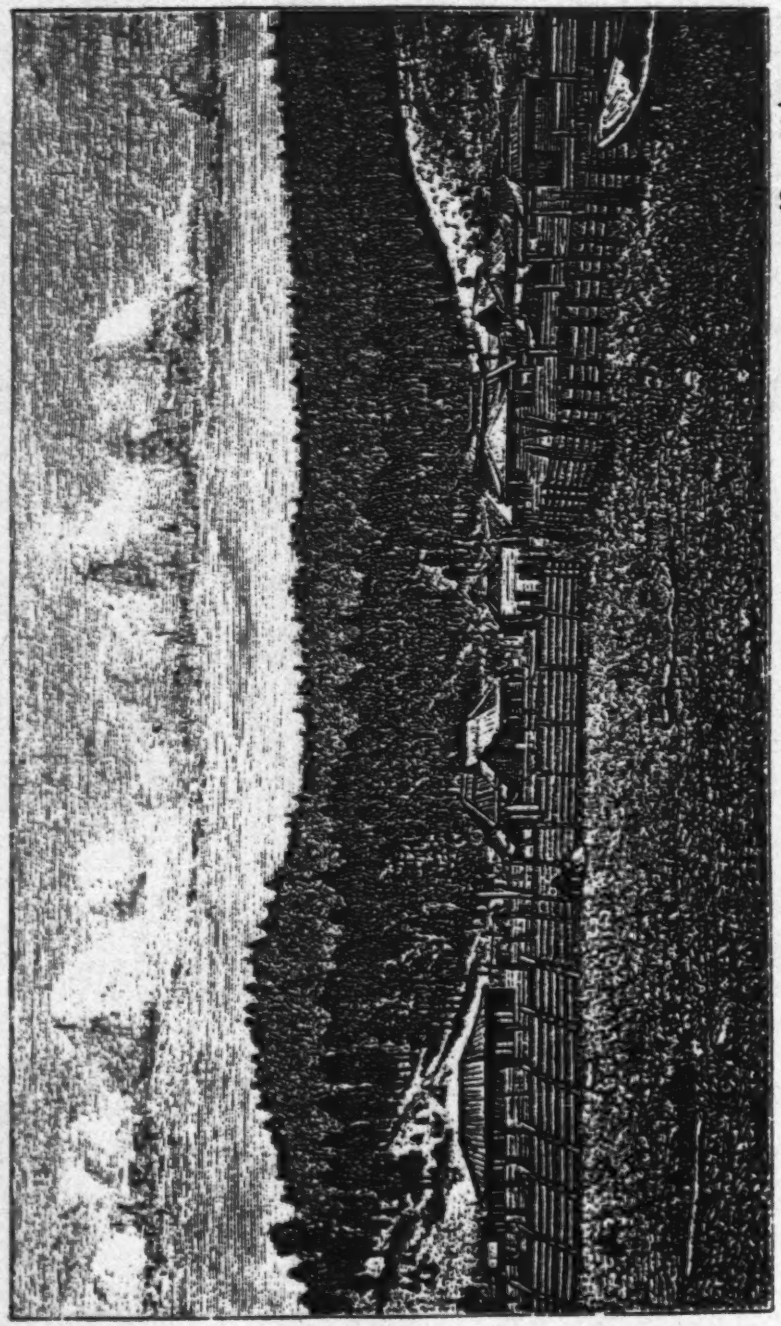
122 At the following stations of Jeljegnjátskie, Kamesták, and Makárinskij, we stopped for only a short time, an hour at most, and traveled through the night, thus reaching the last station before Jakutsk -- Karjalákskij -- at 2:00 on the afternoon of December 9. From here we first of all dispatched the Cossack

/259 cont./

122 interruptions, which were chiefly presented by Aufeis /surface ice/, over the ice of the Lena. The narrow road driven on was elevated above the surrounding surface of the snow almost everywhere, so that every approaching sled caused a halt, sometimes a very long one, when the vehicles, in the attempt to turn aside, fell off the roadway into the soft snow and then could be righted again only with great effort. More than once we were awakened out of a sound sleep by a sudden snow-bath, which, at a temperature of about -30° R is not a very pleasant surprise. My sole scientific work at the stations consisted of reading the aneroid in order later perhaps to calculate from that the approximate altitudes.

122 Never before or afterwards have I entered the stations with
● 342 such repugnance as on this journey. In the Jakut /Yakut/ yurt
262 between Werchojansk /Verkhoyansk/ and Jakutsk /Yakutsk/ it did not really smell pleasant, but here the stench was really beyond all conception. The dwellers along this part of the Lena, Jakuten as well as Russians, favor the /260/ peculiar taste of eating their fish, not prepared fresh or in any other civilized fashion, but after keeping them until they are completely fermented. All the dwellings are so poisoned with this horrible odor that it is actually hardly possible for a European to exist in them, to say nothing of eating, which, of course, is simply impossible outdoors. At every station where we wanted to eat, the provisions brought with us from Jakutsk, roasts and baked goods which our helpful friends had prepared, had to be kept in front of the fire for some time in
122 order to thaw out to some extent. It was undoubtedly on this very journey that I contracted the scorbutic complaint of which the European doctors could not completely cure me until several years later. It was therefore most agreeable to us when we received the news in the district capital, Oljókminsk /Olekminsk/, which we reached on the forenoon of December 20, that quarters were ready for us, since the isprawnik /ispravnik/ had been instructed in a special letter from the governor to give us as hospitable a reception as possible. Soon afterwards he appeared himself and very cordially invited us to lunch. We rested here a full 24 hours and then went on again to our next principal station, the hospitable Bánschtschikowa, not far from Kirensk, the previously mentioned

51: Müller--152 N-2 (1873-1875) 1882 RV2 Yakut RV2



133
137
361
342
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Shérbinsk / Zherbinsk / Station on the Lena.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

parts. By the end of the 18th century, the fur resources of the Yakut district were running out and the district itself had been partially devastated through the piratical rule of the tsarist authorities. At the same time, the Yakut population, which had migrated from the Lena-Vilyuy district for various reasons, appeared on the borderland of Yakutiya, where they had not been seen before—on the Kolyma, Indigirka, Olenek and Anabar right up to the Lower Tunguska Basin.

But even during those first few decades contact with the Russian people favorably influenced the economics and culture of the Yakuts. The Russians brought a higher culture with them; agriculture was already in evidence on the Lena by the middle of the 17th century; the Russian type of dwelling, Russian fabric clothes, new trades, new furnishings and domestic objects slowly began to find their way among the Yakut population.

It is an extremely important fact that the establishment of Russian authority in Yakutiya put a stop to the intertribal warring and looting by the toyons, which up to that time had been a great hardship for the Yakut population.

An end was also put to the arbitrary behavior of the Russian soldiers, who often fell out among themselves and tried to draw the Yakuts into their quarrels. The order established in 1640 in the Yakut country was better than the previous state of chronic anarchy and constant internecine strife.

In the 18th century, by dint of the further penetration by the Russians to the east (the annexation of Kamchatka, the Chukchi peninsula, the Aleutian Islands and Alaska), Yakutiya played the part of a transit camp for new campaigns and the acquisition of more distant lands.

Between 1720 and 1740, the expeditions of Bering increased the importance of the Yakutsk–Okhotsk highway, which was used to transport a great deal of freight (this highway retained its importance up to the middle of the 19th century). All this drew Yakutiya into Russia's system of economic ties and thereby raised the general level of the productive forces of that territory.

The influx of Russian peasants (particularly along the Lena Valley on account of the construction of the mail route in 1773) created the right conditions for mutual influence between Russian and Yakut cultural elements. By the end of the 17th and 18th centuries, agriculture began to be practiced by the Yakuts, though at first it was a very slow business and Russian-type houses began to appear. Nevertheless, even in the 19th century the number of Russian settlers was comparatively small.

In addition to peasant colonization, of great importance in the 19th century was the system of convict settlements in Yakutiya. Together with the criminal convicts, whose effect on the Yakuts was negative, political exiles began to appear in Yakutiya in the second half of the 19th century; these were first the Narodniks[2], and later, in the 1890's, the Marxists, and they played a large part in the cultural and political development of the Yakut masses.

By the beginning of the 20th century, great strides had been made in the economic development of Yakutiya, at least in the central regions

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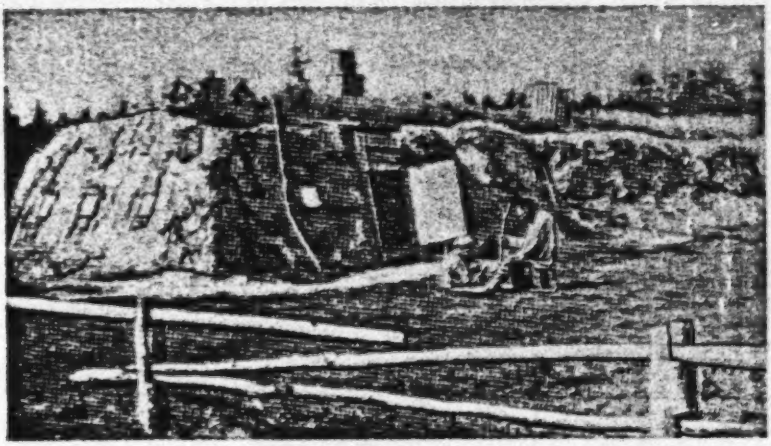
[2] Literally, "Populists;" adherents of a political movement directed toward a radical reconstruction of the social order through the peasantry.—Ed.

53: Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2



Dwelling of poor Yakut.

1926 census) in 70% of the populated points of Yakutiya. This was predominantly at the winter camps (kystyk). The summer camps (sayylyk) were usually larger—from 5 to 10 or more dwellings together. The scattered nature of the settlement was primarily due to the terrain and the type of economy and also to the desire to exploit separate alasy and river valleys scattered about the taiga.

The predominant type of Yakut dwelling (d'ie) was the yurt or balagan. It was a structure with a square base made of erect poles slanting slightly inwards, with a very gently sloping double roof, the overall effect of which was a truncated quadrilateral pyramid. The framework of the yurt consisted of four thick vertical columns at the corners, inserted in the ground, and a horizontal frame of four beams resting on top of them. In most of the yurts, apart from the four corner columns, there were two, four or eight additional ones (in the middle of the walls) supporting the beams. The four sides of the yurt usually faced the four points of the compass, with the entrance facing east. Parallel to the entrance, in the middle of the frame, running from south to north, there was a thick main beam, or two thinner ones alongside. The ends of the thinner beams rested on the main beam, while the other ends rested on the eastern and western beams of the framework and formed a solid, gently sloping double roof. The walls were made of thinner, upright beams or poles, the lower ends of which were inserted into the ground, while the others rested on the top frame close together. Small rectangular windows were made in the southern and western walls, in which were inserted panes; in the old days these panes were covered in the summer with mica or sometimes white cloth, bladder, or bits of glass (the latter were inserted in the birchbark frame); in the winter, pieces of ice were put in the windows. In the eastern wall they made an entrance with a one-piece, slightly inclined plank door covered with cowhide or some other such material. Bark was placed on top of the roof beams and then covered with earth; on the outside the walls were coated with clay mixed with cow dung, the coating being repeated quite often, sometimes every autumn. Around the walls on the outside was a low earth embankment sometimes fortified with a wooden fence (central Yakutiya). The floor was usually made of earth, but the richer

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

people used wooden floors, under Russian influence. The size of the dwelling varied from 5 × 5 to 10 × 10 m, and in height was slightly higher than the head.

An essential part of every yurt was the hearth and the benches along the walls, as well as the simple uniform utensils. The hearth (ohokh) was usually built on the right of the entrance, close to the northeast corner. It comprised a low (about 25 cm, rectangular area made of clay inside a log frame; a cylindrical pipe, slanting slightly backwards, made of poles and coated on the inside with a thick layer of clay was built above the hearth; the bottom of the pipe was open at the front and acted as the mouth of the stove, while the top went through the roof and was almost always open (it was usually stuffed with something overnight); in the winter there was always a fire burning in the hearth to warm and illuminate the dwelling. The hearth was well ventilated and gave out a lot of heat as long as it was being fed with fuel, hence it used up a great deal of fuel.

The plank benches (oron), which were used for sleeping and sitting, stretched along all the walls, filling the gaps between the vertical columns and the bottom of the slanting wall. The benches were divided into different sections, each with its own name and purpose. The most respected bench was the one on the left of the entrance along the southern wall, from the middle to the corner, opposite the hearth—the so-called billirik; somewhat less honorable was the adjoining bench running from that corner along the western wall—the *баστин уҥа орон* (right-hand front bench); these two benches comprised the corner of honor. To the right was the head of the household's seat (*кэтэҕэрин*). The other benches on the left-hand side of the dwelling were intended for the young men, for workers and for ordinary male guests; on the right-hand side (towards the hearth) was the female half of the dwelling, where the women of the family and visiting women sat.

The furnishings in the dwelling consist of a small, round or square wooden table (ostuol) in the corner of honor, and several chairs (olokhmas) with the characteristic shape of a hollow cube with ribs made of flexible rods bent at a right angle and a seat made of a thin board; the furnishings also included various kinds of boxes and chests (made of wood and bound with leather), household utensils and so on; the quantity and quality of all the furnishings depended on the wealth of the householders.

A shed of the same design as the dwelling was usually built onto the northern side for the cattle, often under the same roof, though sometimes divided off from the living quarters by merely a thin wooden partition. There was a door leading from the dwelling to the cattle pen behind the hearth. The pen was built on the northern side so as to save some of the heat, but the close contact of the wintering cattle naturally increased the amount of dirt and made the air in the dwelling worse, where it was stuffy and dirty to begin with.

A small awning resembling a porch, and sometimes even a porchway (chaampy, *кууаз*), was built outside in front of the entrance, particularly by the richer people.

The yurt was the ancient winter dwelling of the Yakuts; references to it can be found in 17th-century documents. In the 19th century the yurt also became the normal summer dwelling. The summer camp yurts were constructed in the same way as the winter ones, except for small differences (a light leather door on a frame and so on) and there was no cattle pen. Instead of the latter a summer calf pen (titik) was built

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Hearth.

somewhere near the yurt, and there were also stalls for cattle, wattle pens for foals and so on. 342

In ancient times, however, the Yakut summer dwelling was different in type and was called the urusa or uraha (this type had practically disappeared by the end of the 19th century). The urasa was a conical construction made of poles covered with birchbark and was fairly spacious (4 to 6 m in diameter). The urasa differed from the conical birchbark chum of the taiga nomads by having a more solid structure; it had a square frame at the top made of beams which were attached to the top ends of four poles serving as the base; the birchbark was sewn together in strips in two layers, neatly and tightly; along the walls on either side were benches almost exactly as in the yurt; the urasa was heated by an open clay raised hearth. In the north this kind of dwelling (which was preserved much longer) was covered with turf instead of birchbark or on top of the birchbark; the rods of the frame in this case were more numerous and closer together. This earthen urasa or kalyman (khoiuman) was a sort of intermediate form between the conical chum and the Yakut log dwelling. 342 178 [35]

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Summer birchbark dwelling and six-cornered house.

There was another type of construction found among the Yakuts (either as a dwelling or as a cattle stall); it was a six- or eight-cornered log yurt with a pyramidal roof, identical to the well-known Buryat and Khakas structures. These yurts were observed, for example, in the regions near the mouth of the Vilyuy, in the Meginskiy and Borogonskiy ulusy, as well as in the Kolymskiy Okrug. They have been known since the 18th century.

During the 19th century the Russian type of structure—the log hut—gradually came into use among the Yakuts, particularly the better off people. At the beginning of the 20th century there were many such houses, particularly in areas near towns. A mixed type was often found: for example, a log hut built onto a yurt, a log hut with a Yakut hearth, and so on.

The living quarters and farm buildings of the family and the space surrounding them constituted the farmstead, which was fenced off with a solid fence of horizontal poles without any gates (in order to get inside the poles at one spot were removed from their supports, or else people simply stepped over them). Inside the enclosure were posts for tying up horses, and these were skillfully carved. In the summer camps the farms were often close together.

When speaking of structures, we should also mention the fact that in the old days the Yakuts knew how to make fortifications or ostrozhki, as they were called in the Russian texts of the 17th century. For example, in 1636-1637, during the campaign against the Kangalastsy, the Russian Cossacks found that "they had built strong forts with two walls covered with gravel, and surrounded by snow and water;" it was only after a two-day assault that the Cossacks managed to take one of these forts. In 1642 the Russians also took a Yakut fortress after great difficulty: "... the fort was made with two walls, the space between the walls was filled with earth, and there were log towers." At a later stage these fortifications disappeared, and no one has described them since in detail. But even in the 19th century it was possible to find special tower-like barns here and there, which belonged to the Toyons.

Clothing

The national Yakut costume had only been partly preserved by the beginning of the 20th century, having been replaced by Russian clothing or at least strongly influenced by the latter. The national cut and purely Yakut materials were preserved to a greater extent in the winter clothing.

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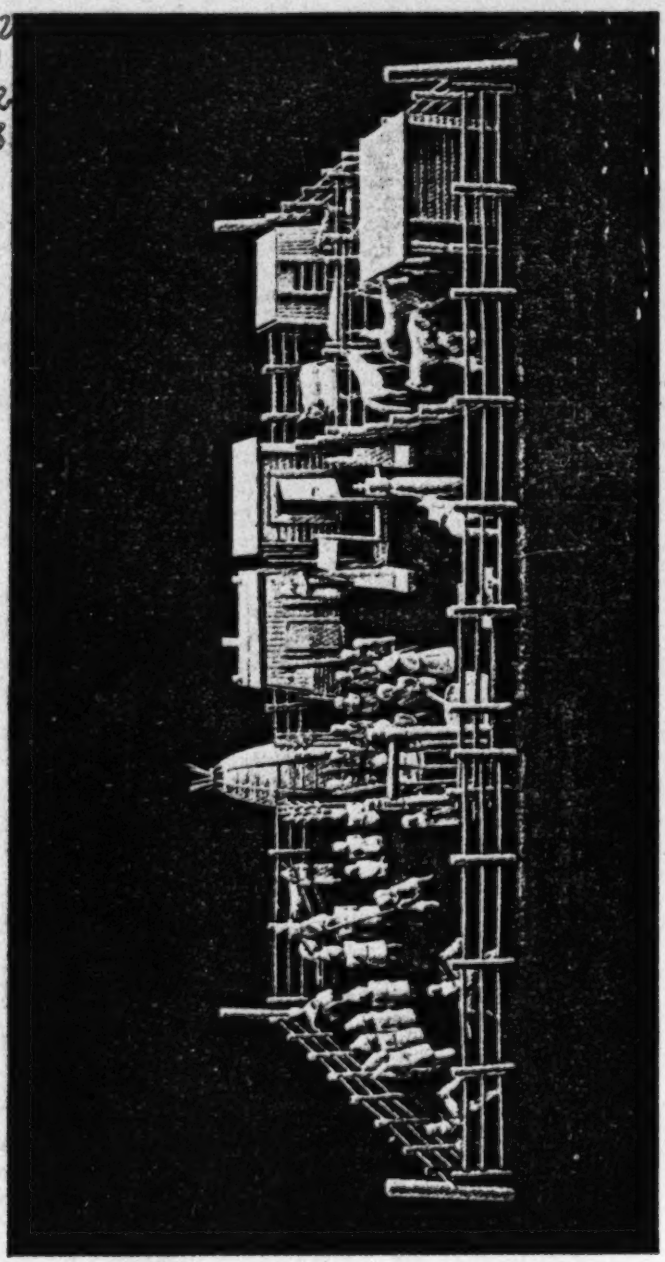

Yakut farmstead. Bone carving, 19th century.

reindeer-breeding collective farms there are now dairy and horse-breeding sections.

The Stalin Even-Yakut collective farm in the Nizhne-Kolymskiy Rayon (formerly known as the Sutanya-Udëran) is successfully developing reindeer-breeding alongside horse-breeding, fishing and hunting. The collective contains more than 17,000 reindeer. In 1955 more than 850 tsentners of such important species of fish as whitefish and baranatka were caught. In 1955, 215,000 rubles worth of furs were delivered to the State. The gross monetary income of this collective farm was 2,430,000 rubles; 1,423,000 rubles were distributed to the collective-farm members for labor units, and for each labor unit the payment was 17 rubles cash, 1.04 kg of meat and 720 g of fish. The monetary income per household averaged 24,000 rubles.

Despite the fact that the chief branches of industry of the northern farms have required periodic migration on the part of the population, all the farms have constructed settlements or collective-farm centers. As an example we can take the settlement of Kolymskaya, the center of the Turvaurgin collective farm. This center contains the headquarters of the farm administration, an incomplete secondary school with boarding facilities, a hospital, a shop, a house of culture with a library, a trading station, a power station, bathhouses, a dairy farm, and 50 standard farmhouses. The farm recently acquired an S30 tractor, a launch and two motorboats. In ethnic composition the Turvaurgin collective farm is multinational and consists of Chukchi, Yukagirs, Yakuts and Evenks.

New Way of Life

A considerable obstacle in the way of the implementation of cultural and public-health program in Yakutiya between 1920 and 1930 was the scattered nature of Yakut settlements due to the ancient occupation of pastoralism. One, two or three yurts together was the predominant type of "settlement." The combining of them into larger units was further required by the everyday farming needs of collective farms.

The construction of settlements under Yakutiyan conditions was a major achievement in socialist reconstruction of the Yakutiyan countryside. It provided an opportunity for installing radio and telephone on the farms and providing them with medical and cultural-educational institutions. In 1950 the construction of settlements in southern Yakutiya was by and large complete. The farm settlements are usually located on elevated riverbanks or by the shores of lakes and consist of several parallel streets. Generally speaking, timber houses rather than yurts are built in these settlements. The center is reserved for the school, collective-farm administrative offices, medical center and club. On many farms yurts are used as work premises. There are quite a few settlements with power stations. In the Megino-Kangalasskiy Rayon alone there are 14 farm power stations with a total output of more than 510 kilowatts. Radio-relay systems have been installed in many of the new settlements. The farmers live in the settlements when they are not out working.

Although several types of farmhouses have been developed, they are still far from perfect. The rigorous climate makes particular demands upon the housing construction in Yakutiya. Special forms of heating are used in the new houses, such as triple frames—the first frame is a single one, while the second is inserted during the winter and has two panes of

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glass, tambours (extra doors with an air lock in between) and zavalinkas (mounds of earth around the house). A common practice is to ice over the house for the winter with a mixture of snow and water. Double ceilings, double floors, horizontal flues and shutters are still used, although rather rarely. The brick or tile stove is sometimes combined with the traditional Yakut fireplace. In many houses there is an extra iron stove in addition to the brick stove.

The internal appearance of dwellings has also changed. The furniture known before to the Yakuts (tables, stools and benches) has become less massive and more varied. We now find bookshelves, chairs, small dressing-tables and mirrors. Factory-made crockery and utensils are encountered in every home. Clocks (including alarm clocks), writing materials, and books have become common, and phonographs are also sometimes found. In most houses the walls are adorned with posters, pictures of Communist Party leaders, photographs, bookshelves, and over the bed there is usually a rug made of skin from the reindeer's head, bead-embroidered saddlecloths, or else the walls are covered with cloth. The windows have curtains.

Tremendous changes have taken place in the way of life of the Yakuts. Many collective farms now have electricity and radio. Clean clothes, hot baths, and attention to their personal appearance are typical of most of the collective-farm members. There has been a change in interests, habits and way of life. The outlook of the population has broadened. Books can now be found in every house. In the settlements people enjoy movies, and attend lectures and discussions in the reading rooms. Young people take part in ski-races, chess and other sporting events. Amateur song and dance groups in the clubs are usually of interest to the whole settlement. The families are no longer isolated and no longer keep to themselves.

A typical innovation for city children is toys, such as figures of horses and cows, rubber dolls, rattles, clockwork trucks, and so on. In addition to these, we commonly find delicately carved wooden animals and tiny bows and arrows. In the schools and boarding facilities children amuse themselves with the most popular table games. In the spring and summer they play various games, including hide-and-seek and blind man's-buff.

A great deal has changed in the Yakut diet, as well.

It should be remembered that before the Revolution Yakutiya was a country of chronic famine. Most of the Yakut population suffered from starvation every year, particularly at the end of the winter and in spring. Bread has now become a normal food not only in the southern but also in the northern areas. Groats and macaroni are now part of the staple diet. The consumption of vegetables and potatoes has also considerably increased.

In many regions the collective farms grow cucumbers, radishes, cabbages, onions and beets. Vegetables are imported in the dehydrated form. Everywhere the population is amply provided with tea, sugar, and tobacco. There are bakeries at trading points in most settlements. Meat and fish are consumed by the Yakuts in large quantities, particularly in the northern regions, where they are the staple diet. In the southern regions an important part of the diet is dairy products. On account of the overall improvement in the living standards of the people, sapwood is no longer consumed as food. Nor do they eat pickled fish any more. Local traditions are still retained in the cooking of dairy products, meat and fish. In the northern regions meat is commonly undercooked. Milk is made into some curious dishes such as suorat, khayakh, chokhoon, *кобгур* and so forth. In a number of regions reindeer gristle is still eaten in the raw state as a delicacy, and so are the liver and bone marrow of this animal. Many families eat freshly

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Dolgan

and Muna on the Lena; the Edzhen group lived on the lower reaches and the Dongot group on the upper reaches of the Olenek. The ancestors of the Karyntuo probably also lived on the Olenek.

Clans with the name Dolgan and Edyan (Edzhen) were commonly found among the Evens and Evenks. For example, Dolgan clans are known in the regions of the Anadyr' and Gizhiga, on the Kamchatka and Okhotsk coast; Edzhen clans are known in the Aldan Basin, around the Ayan on the Okhotsk coast, and so on.

During the 18th century the ancestors of the present-day Dolgans migrated to the northwest, the Dolgan groups moving to the rivers Popigay and Khatanga, the Dongot and Edzhens to the Noril'sk Lakes region, and the Karyntuo to the Boganida River basin. Those left on the Lena became part of the local Yakut naslegs as separate clans.

The first Yakut settlers appeared at the end of the 17th century in the Khatanga Basin on the river Kheta, and from then on the influx continued to increase. In the 18th century these Yakuts formed into the Lower Tundra Yakut Volost.

Even before the Yakuts—at the beginning of the first half of the 17th century—the rivers Pyasina, Dudypta, Boganida, Kheta, and Khatanga were settled by Russian hunters and trappers who founded the ancient Russian population of these places, subsequently known as tundra peasants. They were chiefly concerned with fishing, and to a lesser extent with hunting. It was from them in particular that the Dolgans and Nganasans learned to set pitfall traps for the polar fox. The influence of their Russian neighbors has long been evident in the dwellings and everyday life of the Dolgans, that is to say, during the migration to the Taymyr.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the gap between the culture and everyday life of the different groups of the population in this territory began to narrow. The Yakut language became predominant and was absorbed not only by originally Tungus groups, but also by a large number of tundra peasants. Intermarriage swept away the former barriers between the Evenks, Yakuts and Russians to an ever greater extent.

The system of tsarist administration was no different here from what existed in any other part of Northern Siberia. The Dolgans, Yakuts and Evenks had to pay the fur-tax as "natives" and formed "clans" headed by princelings, while the tundra peasants were forced to pay a poll tax, were formed into a "community" and headed by an elder. People living many hundreds of kilometers away from the nearest centers were economically dependent on the merchants who monopolized supplies to the region, bought up all the furs, and cruelly exploited the population.

Economy and Everyday Life

The main occupations of the Dolgans of the past were reindeer-breeding, hunting, and, in certain regions, fishing. Until quite recently the Dolgans were still leading a nomadic life. Their nomadizing was basically of two types. In the region of the Noril'sk Lakes and in the basin of the Popigay, they retained a more archaic system of nomadizing and did not leave, generally speaking, the forest-tundra belt, but kept to the forest-covered river valleys in the winter, and wandered back to the bare steppes for the summer. The winter camps of other groups of Dolgans stretched along the forest-tundra belt from Lake Pyasino to the lower reaches of the Popigay. These were typical "edge-of-the-forest" dwellers. The winter was spent in the forest-tundra with slight deviations south of the northern boundary of the forest vegetation, while the summer was passed in the tundra,

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Dolgan

towards the reindeer in complete silence, and in summer they wore a protective gray coat the color of the stony tundra. Both in summer and autumn, until the first snow fell, the Dolgans used to trail wild reindeer with hunting dogs. They used poisoned bullets, and probably poisoned arrows as well in the past. As the poison they used rancid reindeer fat. The Dolgans living in the forest-tundra had wide skis of the Tungus type, but they could not use them in the tundra on account of the drifts. 224 [292] [481]

Hunting wild reindeer was only of importance as a source of meat and skin for the Dolgans' own semisubsistence economy.

For catching geese they set traps or arranged noose-type snares by the nests, and also drove moulting geese into nets set up in advance or harried them with dogs and then killed them with sticks. Ducks were trapped with special nets stretched across lakes. Partridges were also caught this way, though only in winter. Sometimes a live female partridge was tied to the net as bait. 223

Polar-fox hunting was of quite considerable economic importance and produced the principal commercial yield. The animals were mainly caught with traps and snares. As it seized hold of the bait, the fox pulled away a stick and released a log which fell onto it. The principle of this trap was borrowed from the Russians; up to that time they had only set self-firing bows on stakes driven into the ground to catch the animals. 224 [177]

The commonest type of fishing tackle both in summer and winter under the ice was an upright net 6-30 m long. The nets were made of threads or horsehair brought from Yakutya. In the Noril'sk Rayon the nets were used in the autumn in mountain rivers. The draught animal employed for this purpose was the reindeer and the ropes from the net were attached to its saddle. Other types of nets were used to a very limited degree. Seines were also commonly used for sterlet, burbot, pike and grayling and trout with hooks prefabricated from bent 10-cm nails. Burbot was also caught with special bone points instead of hooks. 226 [492]

For traveling by water, mainly for fishing purposes, there were tree-trunk canoes brought by the merchants from the Yenisey, or bought from the Yakuts. There were few boats; it was only on the rivers Pyasina and Khatanga that they were used. 505

The Dolgans subsisted mainly on meat and fish. These were boiled or dried and the fish was also eaten in the raw, frozen and unfrozen forms. Fish was also kept in pits where it was pickled. Dead geese were kept buried in the ground. Certain roots were also eaten; they were dug up with reindeer horns or special wooden trowels. 262

The old type of nomadic dwelling among the Dolgans was the conical Tungus-type tent covered with thin panels of suede (in the summer) and deerhide (in the winter). In the old days the Dolgans, like the Evenks, built huts of the Yakut type, but without the windows, benches and hearth. 342 ●

With the advent of the Russians the huts were gradually ousted by sled-tents or baloks. These are little huts on runners. The framework consists of wooden struts tightly covered with bright-colored calico, and on top, to keep it warm, there is a layer of deerskin and a canvas cover to guard against damp. In this kind of dwelling there are two windows with glass, an iron stove, bunks, a table, and sometimes even chairs. Whereas the erection of a pole tent required a great deal of labor during the cold winters, this type of tent can simply be pulled along the ground to a new site. These tents were borrowed in the last century from Russian merchants who traveled in them through the tundra. 342 177

Among other structures we should point out storehouses standing on high piles for keeping winter clothing and utensils. 343

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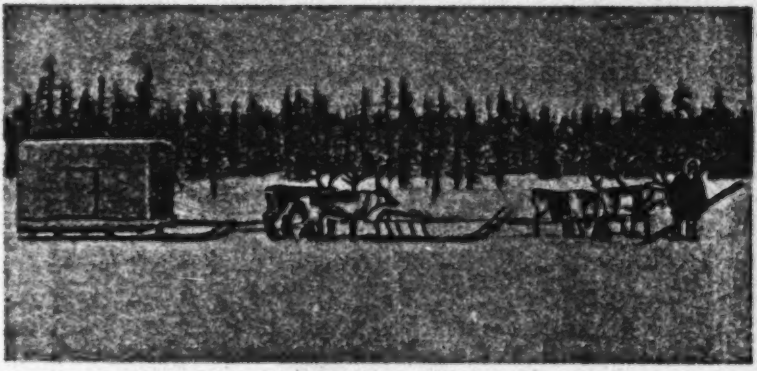
Dolgan



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Winter dwelling, sled tent.

There are more than a dozen versions of the Dolgan national costume, all with their special names, though only different in a few trivial details. The characteristic feature of both men's and women's clothing is a slightly elongated coattail at the back. The Dolgans themselves explain this by the fact that when sitting down on the cold ground in a tent they can spread out the long coattail underneath them. 291

Even before the Revolution household clothing for men and women was made of bought material. Men wore shirts and trousers of the Russian style, and women wore dresses, on top of which they put on aprons without openings. Both the men's shirts and the women's aprons almost always had side pockets and were embroidered with narrow colored piping and numerous buttons. They did not wear any underclothing. 291 177

In the summer and winter men and women wore a cloth coat called the sontap. In the winter they wore a second fox-fur or hareskin coat beneath it. In the winter instead of the cloth coats they sometimes wore the deerskin open dokha (parka) or short coat, and ventless fur clothing with a hood with the fur outside, i.e., the sokuy. When traveling the men wore a sokuy over their cloth coat or deerskin parka. In rainy summer weather a cloth sokuy was put on. In the winter the women wore a son or long polar-fox or hareskin coat, on top of which they had a sontap or sangyyak (deerskin coat). Men and women girdled their clothing with bead-studded belts. The mukalkaan, a bead-embroidered men's parka, was close to the Even type. The old-fashioned men's and women's aprons were also similar to the Even type. Men's and women's hats (bergese) were shaped like hoods. The top was cut from fox feet or from cloth, and was embroidered with beads or finished with narrow bands of colored cloth. Winter footwear was made of deer feet and came in two types: a type reaching to the knee or higher, corresponding to the Evenk boot and often ornamented with beads. 291 [531]

Summer footwear was made of suede. A hole was made in the middle of the sole in summer footwear so that any water leaking inside during walking could run out.

Social Relations and Religion

By the time the Russians arrived, the Dolgans were splitting up into clans. Kinship was reckoned on the male side. There were certain traces 614 611

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The personal property of the collective-farm members includes herds of reindeer (up to 100 head), transport equipment, vertical nets, hunting guns and hunting and fishing tackle. Reindeer-herding remains the chief branch of the economy, but is now done in accordance with good animal husbandry practice. A reindeer technician and a veterinary assistant are attached to each team, which looks after a subherd.]

The Dolgan reindeer-herders on the collective farms pasture the herds in good grazing ground, far from the herding tent by day, and as night falls drive them back to the tent. Having rested, the reindeer at midnight begin to feed near the tent; at dawn they are driven to new feeding grounds some distance away. This grazing system, on the one hand, keeps the reindeer well fed and, on the other hand, they do not stray during the night and are easy to watch. Twenty-four-hour-a-day, year-round guarding of the reindeer has become a rule in collective herding.

[The herd of reindeer is constantly growing. Thus, in the Avamskiy Rayon, the number of reindeer increased over the last five-year period, by more than 50%. The necessity of yearly migrations along the tundra from Dudinka to the Anabar has been eliminated; previously this had a most unfavorable effect on Dolgan reindeer-herding. The demand for pack-reindeer has been reduced, due to the carriage of goods into the Avamskiy and Khatangskiy Rayons by the Northern Sea Route; from here they are brought to remote inland points by steamboat or cutter. Previously, the only route connecting the Dudinka with the Avamskiy and Khatangskiy Rayons in the winter was the reindeer highway from Dudinka to Popigay. Connections are now maintained winter and summer by airplane, although reindeer transport is still of some importance. Its technology is unchanged.

[Hunting technology has been reconstructed. Traps are set in the autumn before the beginning of the blizzards. For this purpose, hunting brigades sometimes journey to the north for several hundred kilometers into the taiga, spending the nights in sled-tents with iron stoves. Hunting brigades are made up before the beginning of the season, traps being distributed on the basis of 150–200 pitfall traps and 10 springtraps per hunter. With the first snow the brigades go out into the tundra and begin to hunt wild reindeer. Foxtraps are baited with the surplus meat obtained. In the Khatangskiy Rayon alone, where the majority of the hunters are Dolgans, the collective farms during the 1948–49 season set 5000 new pitfall traps and prepared 1000 bait-pits for foxes, in which they placed more than 40 tons of bait.

[Fox-hunting begins on November 15th. Springtraps are placed by experienced hunters at places where wild reindeer have been killed in the autumn, or on the bloody tracks of wounded wild reindeer near bait-pits, or previously discovered burrows. Hunting is the main source of income for Dolgan collective farms. The previous predatory methods have gone out of use—spearings, stockades, geese nets. Fishing has become important in a number of areas. Vegetable-gardening and animal husbandry (other than reindeer) have developed on many Dolgan collective farms. The members grow chiefly radishes, cabbage and onions.

[A process of settling down the previously nomadic population is in progress. In the new settlements where the collective-farm members whose work does not make them nomadic live, dwelling-houses of the Russian type have been built, along with various other farm and public buildings. Many settlements have their own electric stations.]

The members of reindeer-herding and hunting brigades lead a nomadic life. Their families frequently travel with them. Separate nomadic groups are now set up, not on the basis of individual relations among different

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Kindergarten on a walk. Taymyr National Okrug, Khatangskiy Rayon.

families, but on the initiative of the collective-farm administration, and their routes are determined in the same way. Fishing brigades sent to fish in some river or lake lead a settled life there, partly in houses built by the collective farm at the fishing grounds.

[The Dolgans, particularly the descendants of the tundra peasants, had Russian cottages even before the Revolution. They now build sturdy houses, using both imported lumber and driftwood. The old-fashioned pole tent is now used only in the summer.

[The Dolgan diet now includes bread, flour, and tea, boiled strong and taken with sugar. Supplies are brought in regularly to the local stores. Medical aid is available at 40 medical and medical-assistant points. The Dolgan-Yakut population is served by hospitals at Noril'sk and in the settlements of Chernoye, Volochanka and Khatanga. In 1953 there were 52 schools, including 3 seven-year schools, in the Taymyr National Okrug. The Dolgan-Yakut population is served by schools at Chernoye, Dolgany, Volochanka, Kheta, Khatanga, Popigay and other points.

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